FROM ROBYN'S READING LIST

Five Ceremony Readings.

From more than three hundred ceremonies, the five I send to every couple. With placement notes, pairing rules, and what each one is best for.

AS SEEN IN

Tamron Hall · *Brides* · *The Knot*

FROM ROBYN'S DESK

Why *these five.*

I have stood three feet from more than three hundred couples while someone read words meant to describe what love is.

Most readings are fine. They go over politely, the room nods, the ceremony continues. These five do something else. They make the room go quiet in a particular way that you can feel before you can name.

I keep a list of every reading I have heard at every ceremony I have officiated, with one line on what it did to the room. These five sit at the top of that list. They are not the most famous. They are the ones that work.

This is a pull from a much longer collection. If you find one in here that matches your couple, use it with my blessing. The rest live in the Couple's Ceremony Kit, organized by tone and pairing.

Robyn

ROBYN ASHLEY WEDDINGS · BROOKLYN · NYC

The Art of *a Good Marriage.*

Wilferd Arlan Peterson

A good marriage must be created.

It is never being too old to hold hands. It is remembering to say *"I love you"* at least once a day. It is never going to sleep angry. It is at no time taking the other for granted.

It is forming a circle of love that gathers in the whole family. It is speaking words of appreciation and demonstrating gratitude in thoughtful ways. It is having the capacity to forgive and forget. It is in giving each other an atmosphere in which each can grow.

It is finding room for the things of the spirit. It is a common search for the good and the beautiful. It is not only marrying the right partner, *it is being the right partner.*

ROBYN'S NOTE

This one sneaks up on people. It starts practical, almost like advice, and by the end half the room is reaching for tissues. Best placed right before the vows: it sets the emotional tone without overpowering what the couple is about to say.

BEST FOR

Classic, traditional, or slightly formal ceremonies. Universally safe. Will not alienate anyone in the room.

I will love you *forever.*

Excerpt from ***The Amber Spyglass*** *· Philip Pullman*

> I will love you forever; whatever happens. Till I die and after I die, and when I find my way out of the land of the dead, I'll drift about forever, all my atoms, till I find you again.
>
> I'll be looking for you, every moment, every single moment. And when I find you, we'll cling together so tight that nothing and no one will ever tear us apart.
>
> *Every atom of me, and every atom of you.*

ROBYN'S NOTE

If your crowd skews younger or literary, this hits like a truck. It is from a fantasy novel and it does not matter, the image of atoms finding each other across infinity is one of the most romantic things ever written. I have used this in three ceremonies and someone cried every time. Including me, once.

BEST FOR

Modern, bookish, non-traditional couples. Elopements. Ceremonies where you want something that feels epic without being religious.

You will feel *no rain.*

Apache Wedding Blessing, adapted

Now you will feel no rain, for each of you will be shelter for the other.

Now you will feel no cold, for each of you will be warmth to the other.

Now there will be no loneliness, for each of you will be companion to the other.

Now you are two persons, but there is only one life before you.

May your days together be good and long upon the earth.

ROBYN'S NOTE

Five lines. That is it. And every single time, the simplicity of it hits harder than a three-page poem. This works for couples who want something that feels sacred without invoking any specific religion. I love it for outdoor ceremonies, something about hearing *"you will feel no rain"* while standing under open sky gives people chills.

BEST FOR

Outdoor ceremonies, spiritual-but-not-religious couples, multicultural weddings, elopements. Short enough to pair with a second reading.

The scaffolding *falls.*

Seamus Heaney · "Scaffolding"

Masons, when they start upon a building,
Are careful to test out the scaffolding;

Make sure that planks won't slip at busy points,
Secure all ladders, tighten bolted joints.

And yet all this comes down when the job's done
Showing off walls of sure and solid stone.

So if, my dear, there sometimes seem to be
Old bridges breaking between you and me

Never fear. We may let the scaffolding fall
Confident that we have built our wall.

ROBYN'S NOTE

This poem is about how the hard, messy work of building a relationship eventually becomes invisible. What is left is something solid. Married couples in the audience always react to this one differently than the single guests. They nod. They squeeze their partner's hand. That is when you know a reading is doing its job.

BEST FOR

Couples who have been together a while, second marriages, vow renewals. Pairs beautifully with personal vows.

I like you, *because.*

Sandol Stoddard · excerpt from ***I Like You***

> I like you because if I am mad at you, then you are mad at me too.
>
> I like you because if I think I am going to throw up, then you are right there with the bucket.
>
> I like you because you know where I went when I got lost, and you are right there to find me.
>
> *I like you because I don't know why, but everything that happens is nicer with you.*

ROBYN'S NOTE

Under thirty seconds to read. Originally a children's book. Absolutely devastating at a wedding. The line *"everything that happens is nicer with you"* has made more grooms cry than any Rumi poem I have ever heard. Use this when you need something short, warm, and honest, especially for elopements where the ceremony is ten minutes total.

BEST FOR

Elopements, micro-weddings, casual ceremonies, couples who hate anything that feels too "performative."

Three rules *for any reading.*

If you are choosing one of these or pulling from somewhere else, the same three rules apply. Skip them and even the best reading falls flat.

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i

Pick the reader before you pick the reading.

Some people can carry humor. Some people break the room with a single line of stillness. Match the reading to the person who will read it, not the other way around. A nervous reader on a witty piece kills both.

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ii

One reading, two at most.

Three readings stack into a literature class. Two is the ceiling for a 15-minute ceremony. One is right for an elopement. If you cannot pick between two, pair a long-form one with a five-line one and put them on opposite sides of the vows.

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iii

Print it in 14-point, double-spaced.

Always. Hand the reader a clean page with no clutter. They are nervous. Help them not lose their place. The smallest font that ever made it into one of my ceremonies got read three times before the reader found the line.

The Couple's Ceremony Kit

Now make the rest of your ceremony *as good as your reading*

Inside the kit

- → More readings than you'll need, each with my note on when it works
- → Complete ceremonies in every style, and the six-question quiz that tells you which one is yours
- → Why one of your promises should be about the water filter
- → The unity ritual I'd never let you do outdoors, and full scripts for all the others

Show me the whole ceremony →

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As featured on the Tamron Hall Show · Brides · The Knot Best of Weddings

The making *of this guide.*

CHOSEN BY	Robyn Walker, in Brooklyn, after *300+* ceremonies. The five readings here are the ones that consistently make the room go quiet.
WHAT IS IN THE KIT	Twenty-five more readings live in the Couple's Ceremony Kit, organized by tone and pairing, with placement notes and time-on-the-clock estimates.
SOURCES	Wilferd Arlan Peterson, Philip Pullman, Apache Wedding Blessing (adapted), Seamus Heaney, Sandol Stoddard. Used here in good faith for educational use; please credit at any ceremony.
IF YOU SHIP A CEREMONY	The rest of my scripts and ceremony notes live at *www.robynashleyweddings.com*.

Chosen by Robyn over hundreds of real ceremonies. The five here are pulled from the list she keeps, not a Pinterest board.

The names of the people who made this thing.